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# Reauthorization: S. 2724 (1990): Memorandum 05

Alexander D. Crary

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AC

*What happened  
at the  
meeting?*

MEMORANDUM

✓

TO: Senator  
FROM: ADC  
RE: Latest on NEA

May 17, 1990

As you have read, Congressmen Gunderson and Gingrich announced yesterday that they intend to propose the major reorganization of the NEA along the lines recommended by the Board of the State Arts Agencies. But, as I expected, the state arts agencies have received such heat for doing this end run around the rest of the arts community that by tomorrow they will either oppose it or, at the least, back away from it. Where this will leave Gunderson and Coleman is unclear. But without the full backing of the state arts community, their proposal loses a lot of steam. This helps us and helps deter talk of a one-year extension. Congressman Carr's comments in today's TIMES about the wisdom of a one-year extension are very unhelpful. He seems to be plugging in more for the press coverage than anything else.

On the Senate side we are still holding pretty steady despite the expanding chaos on the House side. I met with the Committee Democratic staff yesterday and found them all behind us: seeking a 5 year extension of current law with no harmful content restrictions. Kassebaum's staff tells me that this is their position as well and it is just a question of what we have up our sleeve to counteract Helms.

Pat Williams had a press conference today to call an Arts Summit Meeting next Tuesday where 20 to 30 arts groups will supposedly sit down in closed session and come up with a common proposal for reauthorization. In my view this meeting is unnecessary and could blow up into yet another battle between the arts groups. It also could undermine the very delicate consensus that we actually might reach in the Senate. Williams may need this meeting to strengthen his position in the House but it does nothing for us. I have told the groups that the best resolution of such a gathering would be for them to come out after 15 minutes and say they agree on 3 things: 1) that they support a 5 year extension 2) of current law and 3) with no harmful content restrictions. This would help us but it is a lot to hope for with such a volatile community that is still divided over the now-failed state arts agency end run.

We have subcommittee mark-up scheduled for June 12 with full committee on June 20.

Two attachments from today's NY TIMES.